SATURDAY LETTERS

Oscar for Best Female Director?

Terry Pristin's article, "Is Streisand Snub Borne of Disparity?" (Feb. 21), brings to light some interesting points. Pristin notes that some cynics ask, "Should separate Oscars be awarded for best male director and best female director, just as they are for best actor and best actress?"

The answer is no. In a world trying to move away from sexism and segregation, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and all institutions, should make every effort to treat all people as equals. It is time we stop insisting on separating men and women over so many issues.

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Perhaps the solution to the recurring charges of sexism in the director's branch of the academy is to create two categories for best director in the annual Oscar ballot.

The actor's branch distinguishes between gender. It would be inspiring to see a list of nominations for best director, female.

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'Nova' and 'JFK'

It is interesting that Howard Rosenberg points to the "Nova" documentary as the sane alternative to my film "JFK" in his Feb. 7 column ("A Ratings Conspiracy"), but, in praising it as "meticulously fair," he ignores the ridiculous premise of the "Nova" film.

Take, for example, the "Nova" re-creation of the fatal head shot to President Kennedy: Placing a loose skull atop a platform, they shoot it from above and behind at a point where the skull and platform meet. Fragments flew all over but the largest piece flew up and back. This supposedly proves that the shot came from the Book Depository. What they don't mention is that a flesh-and-blood head attached to a body in a moving vehicle reacts nothing like a skull casually placed on a podium. A nice demonstration, but it proves nothing.

Equally preposterous is the program's claim that Oswald got off three shots in under six seconds, an endorsement of the magic bullet theory. Had the program's producers researched the actual "science" of this improbable feat (by, say, reading Josiah Thompson's "Six Seconds in Dallas," an excellent exploration of the marksmanship required to accomplish this), they might not have championed this approach with blind enthusiasm.

Although "Nova" uses physical evidence to investigate the claims against the Warren Commission, it is evident from re-enactments such as the one mentioned above that theirs was an insufficient investigation. "Nova" shouldn't pretend to be a fair and thorough examination of the facts. The program adopts the lone assassin/single-bullet theory, a position lent substantial authority through Walter Cronkite's narration.

"Nova" doesn't go nearly far enough in its exploration of arguments opposing the Warren Report, which should leave critical viewers to wonder why they weren't presented all the evidence.

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